

Tower Grove Park Sailboat Pond  
Tower Grove Park  
4255 Arsenal Street  
St. Louis  
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1137-H

HABS  
MO,  
96 SALU,  
46H-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20240

## -TOWER GROVE PARK SAILBOAT POND

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Location: Tower Grove Park Headquarters at 4255 Arsenal Street, St. Louis, Missouri. The pond lies 600' south of 400' east of the North Gate at Tower Grove and Magnolia Avenues. The pond fronts on the north edge of the main east-west drive, within the original boundaries of Tower Grove Park.

USGS Webster Groves Quadrangle, Universal Transverse  
Mercator Coordinates: 15,738900.4276540

Present Owner: City of St. Louis

Present Use: Ornamental pond for toy sailboats.

Significance: This is one of the principal water features of Tower Grove Park and is a well-preserved example of the Romantic landscape design favored by British and American architects in the nineteenth century. The composition includes simulated ruins actually constructed from fragments of a demolished St. Louis hotel.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1873 (Mss. of Board Minutes, 1/1874, p.50).
2. Architect: See "Original Plans, etc."
3. Original and subsequent owners: The City of St. Louis. For a complete description of the park boundaries see the HABS report on Tower Grove Park MO-1137-H.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers, etc.: Josh Saba cut the stones from the ruins of the Lindell Hotel (Comp. 1868, p.156, 3/1/72). The fragments were purchased from McCath Ames for \$1853.75 (Comp. 1868, p. 14, 7/2,/61).
5. Original plans, construction, etc.: The stones of the mock ruins were quarried from the remains of the Lindell Hotel, once located in Washington Avenue between Sixth and Seventh Streets in St. Louis, after its burning on March 30, 1867. Completed in 1863, it was then owned by Peter and Jesse Lindell, friends of Park founder and Park Comptroller Henry Shaw. The hotel was the design of George Ingram Barnett who was also the architect for many of the buildings in Tower Grove Park.

For biographical information on Barnett see the HABS report on Tower Grove Park MO-1137-H. The ruins were placed in the park and arranged by Henry Shaw and the Chief Gardener at the Missouri Botanical Garden, James Gurney, Sr., later Superintendent of the Park.

Following is a description of the pond in 1883:

It is oblong in shape; on three sides, east, west, and south, is bounded by grassy banks; on the north side there is a rockery, and an artistic arrangement of stone blocks selected from the remains of the first Lindell Hotel... These large stones are laid together to resemble a ruined facade, including some broken columns, the whole having an irregular but graceful outline, and the green vines that now cover them heighten the picturesque effect, adding, also, a suggestion of antiquity. There is an open view to the water on the south side between stone copings, and near by are some weeping-willows, the banks have not been thickly planted with trees, and the sheen of the water can be seen from distant places.

There is a fountain in the centre of the pond, and a lower water jet on each side, some little distance away, and the silvery sprays are thrown to a considerable height. The water is turned on during music hours, and on all other occasions when visitors are numerous; the pond is not large, but its gleaming surface and the play of its fountains add a wonderful charm... Boating is not allowed as the pond is hardly of sufficient size for that amusement. (MacAdam, p. 37).

6. Alterations and additions: The balustrade was added in 1899, of stones taken from the "Old Custom House, and Post Office Building" donated by Messrs. Bruce, contractors (Mss. of Board Reports, 4/16/90, p. 355).

In 1916 the pond was enlarged, a concrete retaining wall built, and the balustrade rebuilt on a concrete base for \$575 (Annual Report of Commissioners, 1916, 1/9/1917, p. 9). The original wrought iron center fountain was probably removed at this time.

A concrete path surrounding the pond was added in 1951 (Annual Report of Commissioners, 1951, 1/52, p. 7). In 1969, the project to reconstruct the east and west foundations, railings, and pillars, and to add a new bed was completed (Post-Dispatch). These changes were necessitated by vandalism. Two hundred and twenty feet of balustrade and fifty-two feet of pond wall were involved and the cost was about \$12,000 (Superintendent's Reports for March-April

1969). In September 1970, two stone settees and flower urns were added to the setting (Superintendent's Report for September 1970). Though the pond had two fountain-jets flanking the centerpiece in the nineteenth century, only the center fountain is now used.

B. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: Two showing pond c. 1875, before balustrade added, and one c. 1918 with the addition are on glass plates in Fuhrman Collection, Scottish Rite Library, 3633 Lindell, St. Louis, Missouri. (See HABS photocopies.)

2. Bibliography:

- a. Primary and unpublished sources:

1. Manuscripts, etc.: Henry Shaw's Comptroller Report Books '1868,' '1875,' '1882,' and '1888;' Tower Grove Park Receipts and Vouchers for 1867-1889; the Reports of the Board of Commissioners from 1869-1889; and the Superintendent's Monthly Reports for 1960-1974 are in the custody of Park Superintendent Miss Bernice E. Gurney and probably will be transferred from her office at 4274 Magnolia Ave. to the Shaw Manuscript Collection at the John S. Lehmann Library in the Missouri Botanical Garden, 2345 Tower Grove Avenue, St. Louis, Mo., by the end of the summer of 1974.
    2. Deed books: City Hall, Market Street, St. Louis, Missouri.
    3. Interviews: August 8, 1974; 4274 Magnolia Ave., St. Louis. Superintendent Gurney explained that there was no "architect" for the pond-ruins. These were arranged according to Henry Shaw's and James Gurney Sr.'s direction.

- b. Secondary and published sources:

Annual Report of Board of Commissioners Tower Grove Park.  
St. Louis: Nixon-Jones Printing, 1899-1919.

\_\_\_\_\_. St. Louis: Arcade Print Shop,  
1920.

\_\_\_\_\_. St. Louis: Mound City Press,  
1921-1942.

\_\_\_\_\_. St. Louis: Allied Printing,  
1943-1959.

MacAdam, David H. Tower Grove Park. St. Louis: R. P. Studley and Co., 1883.

"Renovating Sailboat Pool at Tower Grove Park," St. Louis Post-Dispatch, May 1, 1969, p. 5S.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This typical nineteenth century landscape pool is ornamented with the actual remains of a local structure of architectural importance to evoke the romantic atmosphere of an ancient ruin.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Oblong shape, running east-west, 105' by 174', 3' deep at center. A 40'-long, 20'-wide channel running north-south intersects the pond at the center of the south side. A set of steps leads out of the water at the open south end of the channel.
2. Foundations: Concrete and flagstone; perimeter of concrete.
3. Construction: A low, Indiana limestone balustrade runs along the east and west edges of the channel and along the straight section of the south side of the pool itself.

In the center of the pool, on the axis of the channel, a cast-iron fountain rises from a concrete foundation resting on fragments of limestone capitals, moldings, columns, and brackets, grouped in an irregular, rounded mound.

The fountain is triple-tiered. The three basins are of diminishing size and have scalloped edges and a leaf motif on their undersides, which radiates from the center post. The post tapers as it rises to the bottom of the topmost and smallest basin. Between the two topmost tiers, the post is plain and modeled in double-S curves. The base of the fountain consists of three scrolled members, with their widest points resting on the concrete foundation, bracketing the centerpost which is there embellished with floral motifs.

On the north edge of the pond are three mock ruins constructed from limestone fragments of quoins (some vermiculated), founda-

tion blocks, lintels, pediments, voussoirs, and moldings. The center "ruin" is on axis with the fountain and the north-south channel; the other two flank it. The outlines of all three are irregular, but they form a symmetrical composition.

C. Site:

1. General setting and landscape: On three sides, east, west, and south, the pond is bounded by grassy banks. The mock ruins are shaded by oaks; the channel to the south, by cedars. The pond, like the bandstand just east of it, was designed as a major gathering point in Tower Grove Park for public amusement, relaxation, and peaceful contemplation. Around the perimeter are benches and pedestals with iron ornamental urns for flowers. The pond lies 600' south and 400' east of the North Gate at Tower Grove and Magnolia Avenues.

Prepared by Carolyn Hamm  
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Historians  
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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Tower Grove Park and Missouri Botanical Garden Project was jointly sponsored by the Historic American Buildings Survey of the National Park Service, the Board of Commissioners of Tower Grove Park, and the Board of Trustees of the Missouri Botanical Gardens.

Recorded under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, and Kenneth L. Anderson, HABS Principal Architect, the project was conducted during the summer of 1974 and 1975 at the Historic American Buildings Survey field office at the Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis.

1974 Team: Robert Harvey, Project Supervisor, (Landscape Architect); Steven Bauer, Project Foreman, architect, (University of Kansas); Carolyn Hamm, project historian, (Cornell University); Patrick Ackerman, student assistant architect, (Washington University); Suzanne Fauber, student assistant landscape architect, (University of Virginia); and Carol Macht, student assistant landscape architect, (University of Michigan).

1975 Team: Stuart Mertz, A.S.L.A., project supervisor, (landscape architect); Steven Bauer, Project Foreman, (Columbia University); Peter Dessauer, project historian, (Clemson University); Lennard A. Roberts, student assistant architect, (Cornell University); John R. Temmink, student assistant architect, (University of Virginia); and Theodore Torpy, landscape architect, (WASO).

The drawings were revised by HABS architect Paul Dolinsky, and the written data were edited by HABS Architectural Historian Denys Peter Myers, in the HABS Washington office in 1983. The photographs were taken by HABS/HAER Photographer Jet Lowe in 1983.